

- e) route of travel setting means for setting a route of travel on the road map from the start point to the set destination; and
- f) display control means for controlling an image of the road map surrounding the set route of travel which is displayed on the display unit in a form of a bird's eye view such that the bird's eye as a viewing point is referenced at a predetermined position on a raised plane from said road map and offset in a direction opposite to the set destination with respect to the present position of the vehicle being displayed to appear to a user as looking down over the road map from the bird's eye, said road network image data being displayed on the display unit in a perspective view from the bird's eye view image of the road map and the character data being displayed on the display unit as plane data at a constant size regardless of a position of the displayed image screen on the display unit with respect to the present position of the vehicle.
2. An apparatus for navigating a vehicle using a display unit as claimed in claim 1, which further comprises:
- g) first road network image data extracting means for extracting a first part of the road network image data to be displayed on a first part of the image data to be displayed on a second part of the display image screen of the display unit, the first part of the display image screen corresponding to a display area from a lowest side of the display image screen up to a predetermined height thereof as viewed externally from the display unit;
- h) second road network image data for extracting a second part of the road network display image screen of the display unit, the second part of the display image screen corresponding to another display area from the predetermined height up to a highest side of the display image screen as viewed externally from the display unit; and
- i) first character data extracting means for extracting a first part of the stored character data to be displayed on the first part of the display image screen; and
- j) second character data extracting means for extracting a second part of the stored character data to be displayed on the second part of the display image screen, and wherein said display image control means controls the image to be displayed on the display image screen of the display unit in the form of the bird's eye view such that the first part of the road network image data extracting means is displayed onto the second part of the road network image data on the first part of the character data on the first part of the display image screen after the first part of the character data extracted by the first character data extracting means has been displayed on the first part of the display image screen, and the second part of the stored character data extracted by the second character data extracting means is, in turn, displayed onto the second part of the display image screen after the second part of the stored road network data extracted by the second road network data extracting means has been displayed on the second part of the display image screen.
3. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
- g) first road network image data extracting means for extracting a first part of the road network image data to be displayed on a first part of the display image screen of the display unit, the first part of the display image screen corresponding to a display area from a lowest

- side of the display image screen up to a predetermined height thereof as viewed externally from the display unit;
- h) second road network image data extracting means for extracting a second part of the road network display image screen of the display unit, the second part of the display image screen corresponding to another display area from the predetermined height up to a highest side of the display image screen as viewed externally from the display unit; and
- i) first character data extracting means for extracting a first part of the stored character data to be displayed on the first part of the display image screen; and
- j) second character data extracting means for extracting a second part of the stored character data to be displayed on the second part of the display image screen, and wherein said display image control means controls the image to be displayed on the display image screen of the display unit in the form of the bird's eye view such that the first part of the road network image data extracted by the first road network image data extracting means is displayed onto the first part of the character data on the first part of the display image screen after the first part of the character data extracted by the first character data extracting means has been displayed on the first part of the display image screen, and the second part of the stored character data extracted by the second character data extracting means is, in turn, displayed onto the second part of the display image screen after the second part of the stored road network data extracted by the second road network data extracting means has been displayed on the second part of the display image screen;
- wherein the first part of the display image screen corresponds to a part of the road map ranging from the present position of the vehicle to a predetermined distance away from the set destination and the second part of the display image screen corresponds to the remaining part of the road map ranging from the predetermined distance to the set destination and wherein said character data includes names of places.
4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said road map storing means stores the road map including road network image data and character data related to the road map, which further comprises:
- g) first road network image data extracting means for extracting a first part of the road network image data to be displayed on a first part of the display image screen of the display unit, the first part of the display image screen corresponding to a first range of the road map within which a part of the road network ranging from the present position of the vehicle to a predetermined distance away from the set destination;
- h) second road network image data extracting means for extracting a second part of the road network image data to be displayed on a second part of the display image screen of the display unit, the second part of the display image screen corresponding to a second range of the road map within which the remaining part of the road network ranging from the predetermined distance to the set destination falls;
- i) first character data extracting means for extracting a first part of the stored character data to be displayed on the first part of the display image screen of the display unit; and
- j) second character data extracting means for extracting a second part of the stored character data to be displayed